



SMALL GROUP: THURSDAY

BIBLE STORY: Light of the World (Matthew 5:14-16)

MEMORY VERSE: You will fill me with joy when I am with you. Acts: 2:28

KEY QUESTION: Who can celebrate Jesus?

BOTTOM LINE: I can celebrate Jesus!

PLAY TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

LIGHT IT UP

WHAT YOU NEED:

Shallow, clear plastic bins, battery-powered Christmas lights, play sand, and paintbrushes

WHAT YOU DO:

Before the Activity: In one bin, place battery-operated lights on the bottom and turn them on. Stack the second clear bin inside the bin with the lights so the bottom of the bin is sitting on top of the lights. Add a thick layer of sand, making sure you can still see the glow of the lights through it. Add paintbrushes to the bin.

During the Activity: Encourage the children to investigate what happens when you move the sand around. Ask children to draw hearts, smiley faces, party hats, etc. in the sand with the brushes.

After the Activity: Review the Bible story.

WHAT YOU SAY:

Before the Activity: "Friends, look at this awesome light bin I have. There are lights in the bottom, and even with sand over it, we can see the lights shining. What do you think will happen when we use these brushes to swipe the sand away? Let's investigate!"

During the Activity: "Let's take turns and use the brushes to wipe the sand away. What do you see? Yes, you see the light shine through. Wow! Now can you draw a heart? (Pause.) Great! Can you make a smiley face? Yes, that is awesome. Look at the light! (Repeat as desired.) It was so fun to play with the light box today."

After the Activity: "Friends, WE have a light we can shine. It might not look like a



flashlight or a box with lights, but it does look like kindness, sharing, and forgiveness. When we shine our light, we show everyone that Jesus loves them and wants to be their friend forever. That is a great reason to celebrate! Jesus wants to be your friend, (point to a child) and your friend, (point to a child) and your friend, (point to a child) and my friend too! (Point to yourself.) That's a great reason to celebrate! **Who can celebrate Jesus? I can celebrate Jesus!**"

JOURNAL AND PRAYER

WHAT YOU NEED:

Memory Verse Card from Day One in Bible, journal, and a fun-shaped pen

WHAT YOU DO:

During the Activity: Lead the children to do a conga line as they walk to Small Group spot. Talk about today's Bible story, say the memory verse, give stickers or handstamps, and write in the journal.

After the Activity: Pray with the children using the list you made in the journal.

WHAT YOU SAY:

Before the Activity:

"It's Small Group time, party starters! Line up behind me! We're going to do a conga line all the way to our Small Group spot. Just do what I do! Step, step, step, stop! (Put right foot out to the side.) Step, step, step, stop! (Put left foot out to the side.) Step, step, step, stop! (Put right foot out to the side.) Step, step, step, stop! (Put left foot out to the side.)

(Continue to lead the children in a conga line all the way to your small group spot.) "Yay! Thank you for dancing with me! Let's sit down and talk about today's Bible story. One, two, three, sit down with me!"

During the Activity: (Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.) "In our Bible story today, Jesus told us to let our light shine. We shine when we are kind, share, forgive, and help others. And when we shine, we show others that Jesus wants to be their friend forever! Loving people the way Jesus loves us is another way to celebrate Jesus. Who can celebrate Jesus? I can celebrate Jesus! Again! Who can celebrate Jesus? I can celebrate Jesus! (Clap and cheer.) Woo-hoo! Yay, Jesus!

"We have been learning a Bible verse that will help us remember one of the reasons we celebrate Jesus. It says (turn the pages of your Bible to the Memory Verse Card), 'You (point up) will fill me with joy (brush flat hands upward twice)



when I am with you (fists together with thumbs on top), ' Acts 2:28.
(Open hands like a book.)

(Close Bible and lay it down.)

"Let's stand up and say those words together with the motions one time together. 'You (point up) will fill me with joy (brush flat hands upward twice) when I am with you (fists together with thumbs on top),' Acts 2:28. (Open hands like a book.) You sound SOOO good! (Clap.) Okay, everyone, it's time to sit down. Anyone who wants to try and say that verse can give it a try. I have my stickers/hand stamp ready! (Give each child the opportunity to try and say the Bible verse.) Everyone, clap for [child's name]! Here is your sticker/handstamp! (Say this with each child as they try and say the Bible verse.)

"I'm so proud of each of you for trying! Now, when I count to three, I want you to stand up and show me your sticker/ handstamp. One, two, three! (Pause.) Yay! (Give fist bumps and high fives.)

"Now let's sit down again so we can write in our prayer journal and talk to God. (Hold journal and fun-shaped pen.) We are going to make a list of ways we can help others, because when we help others, we shine our light! So, when I say your name, tell me one way you can help. (Remember to print so the children can recognize their names and the letters.) Look at all of these wonderful ways we can help others. Let's use this list when we pray."

After the Activity: "Would anyone like to pray before I pray? (Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.) Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to teach us to be kind, help, share, and forgive. Help us do these things so we can shine our light and show other people that Jesus wants to be their friend forever. Jesus IS the good news, and He is so worth celebrating! We love You, God! In Jesus' name, amen."